

Pre-Council Meeting

PWU/Planning - N 27th Street Access
March 21, 2005

Meeting Began at: 10:30

Meeting Ended at: 11:00

Members Present: Terry Werner, Ken Svoboda, Annette McRoy, Patte Newman, Jon Camp, Glenn Friendt

Members Absent: Jonathan Cook

Others Present: Roger Figard, Randy Hoskins, Marvin Krout, Dennis Bartels, Rick Peo, K. Seacrest, D. Kalkowski, M. Hunzeker, A. Cornelius-Jones

Marvin Krout, Planning Department, stated that this is a request for a Use Permit. Normally when the Planning Commission approves these it is a final action. However, Public Works staff had recommended no access at this site and had filed an appeal with City Council. Krout indicated he agreed with Public Works' concerns and recommendation. He stated that this request will set precedence for future requests and will eventually hurt the capacity of N 27th Street to carry traffic. Krout indicated that there will be a public hearing so Council will hear both sides.

INTRODUCTION

Roger Figard, City Engineer for Public Works, stated that the purpose was to provide information ahead of time to give Council a chance to look things over before the Public Hearing. There has been a lot of pre-planning that has been put into N 27th Street and this Use Permit is contrary to that planning.

Randy Hoskins, City Traffic Engineer for Public Works, presented some history of this site and will conclude with the current status. Hoskins handed out a set of maps to Council and briefly explained and reviewed them. These maps covered the area from Superior Street to the I-80 on-ramp along 27th Street. Hoskins pointed out that there are virtually no driveways out onto 27th Street. When 27th Street was being proposed for construction back in the early 1990's, what the State of Nebraska required the City to do was to purchase control of access to all of the properties along 27th Street. Once 27th Street was built it was going to be a high standard arterial street.

To the south of Fletcher on the west side of the street, there are two accesses (driveways) that remain that belonged to homesteads at the time. There is no retail access to N 27th Street, north of Superior Street.

The King Ridge Development, north side of Folkways and east of 27th Street, was created around the year 2000. This development was hoping to acquire the King Crest property and make it all part of one larger center. They were not successful and the result was an internal access and circulation system set up for King Ridge. The grading of that property was done assuming that the

other property would be acquired. There is quite a bit of grade difference between the two properties. One of the important things to keep in mind is that the King Ridge site traffic study indicated that there will be an additional 21,000 trips a day when it gets built out (projected by the study to be in 2005). Currently, there are 23,000 trips per day in this area on 27th Street.

The T.O. Haas property, located just to the south of the King Crest property, was originally part of the King Ridge Development. It was split off separately prior to the King Ridge Traffic Study and was included in the numbers for that study. That site does not have any access to 27th Street. At the time it was created, it did have a full turning access to Folkways through a median break. When the North Star High went in just to the east of the King Ridge Development, the intersection of 27th and Folkways became signalized. As a result of that signalization, it became necessary to close the median break on Folkways due to traffic stacking up during peak hours. Now, traffic wanting to go to T.O. Haas must go down to the median opening approximately 550 feet east of their driveway and make a U-turn to get back. Traffic can also come off of 33rd Street to the east to get into the site.

The King Crest Use Permit recently went to the Planning Commission, where they approved an access out onto 27th Street. The first time this project went before the Planning Commission, they asked for a two week delay in order that the King Crest site could work with the developers of the King Ridge site to come up with another way of access in light of the grade considerations that are a problem. The developers and Olsson Associates did come up with a means to provide access to both the King Crest and T.O. Haas sites by splitting lots and creating an extra roadway that will provide a better access than the original concept.

When the Planning Commission granted a break in the control of access, The Law Department believe that they went beyond their authority. The City Council and the Mayor have this authority, but not the Planning Commission. The reasons that Public Works feels that the break in control of access should not be allowed:

- There are not other retail accesses on 27th Street where driveways meet the 27th Street corridor. This becomes an issue of fairness.
- If we break the control of access for this site, other developments will make the same request. Once this happens, then we have lost all the planning and hard work that was done by staff to maintain this corridor as a smooth, safe and efficient roadway.

Hoskins showed an aerial of the Walmart site just north of Superior Street on the east side of 27th Street. This illustrated how access was maintained for this site. There are no private driveways out onto the street, there are a number of private roadways. All the businesses have access off of internal access roads. Werner asked about Chandler Drive. Figard responded that

Chandler Drive is set up as an internal access to the site. It is closer to 27th and Superior than what is normally preferred. Figard said that the point is as we move north on 27th Street, including any redevelopment projects, we try to consolidate driveways, provide a street type or private road access and pad site access off the back side. Hoskins clarified that this is a private roadway which means there is no parking on it and has higher standards than a commercial driveway. McRoy asked about the difference between a private roadway and a public drive. Hoskins clarified that a private street does not allow parking on it. It is built to a higher standard than a driveway. A driveway entrance allows for parking and a much narrower driveway which can make entering or exiting more difficult. Figard added that none of the pad sites have a direct driveway to 27th Street. The access to all of the pad sites come from an agreed upon internal circulation system. The goal is to preserve the integrity of the corridor.

Hoskins finished up by saying that some of the reasons that were heard at the Planning Commission Hearing as to why this should be allowed are:

- *T.O. Haas trucks having to make u-turns to get to the site.* Hoskins stated that most truck drivers will figure out in advance how to get to their destination and most likely would not be making u-turns.
- *This is not part of a center (like Walmart) therefore, special consideration should be given.* Hoskins said that ultimately when this is all built out, it will be a part of a center and will look like the other sites.
- *The grading is not working.* The plan that has been worked out by Olsson Associates and the King Ridge Development, does provide access and is a shorter route than originally planned.
- *Sympathy for a local business man.* Hoskins can understand that the T.O. Haas site was not expecting the median to be closed. There are other similar situations around town and will be more in the future. We need to continue to work on the major corridors to keep them running smoothly and efficiently. The minimizing of the accesses out onto the major streets will keep traffic moving smoothly and safely.

Figard concluded that there are examples all over town where developments like Walmart, who have internal access, are proving successful. There is a business mind-set that they need a driveway at their front door on the major street right at the intersection. There is not any evidence that over time that these other sites have not been successful. In addition, if there are crashes coming in and out of those median breaks and driveways, it is Public Works' opinion that this actually discourages people from coming into the area. Public Works' thinks that their option provides for a better solution.

Jon Camp inquired about the median at T.O. Haas being closed off and how trucks are getting to the business?

Hoskins thought that most trucks would be coming in off of 33rd Street and down Folkways without making a u-turn. U-turns at this location are allowed.

Camp asked if Public Works' preference was to have no access from Folkways clear up to Enterprise Drive off of 27th Street?

Figard agreed and stated that Public Works has worked with the Development Community to provide additional right-turn lanes which serves as a third thru-lane and helps with capacity and safety.

Camp asked if there were any provisions in the standards for signage to assist future businesses?

Hoskins indicated that since this parcel is under separate control that something would have to be worked out with the developer. Figard said that Public Works would be supportive of this if we could better work where the accesses are. We are in favor of giving advanced warning when possible. Figard said that Public Works would look into where signing could go.

Patte Newman commented that creating the access probably cost the City something substantial for the North property.

Figard concurred that the City paid extra money all the way through that project to buy control of access.

Newman asked if that went on the title of the property, so technically the owner of the property should have known about this?

Hoskins said that it was clearly on the deed.

Newman inquired as to how soon the north 30th private roadway going to go in?

Hoskins answered that in speaking with the Developer's attorneys that they would be willing to put the roadway in relatively quickly.

Terry Werner asked about if bus stops were considered in the planning process?

Hoskins stated that we typically work with Star Tran when designing major projects and look into what locations that they would like to see bus stops. Figard added that this design was done sometime ago and that this is a part of the retro-fits that we need to go back and see if anything was left out and needs to be incorporated.

Werner inquired if bringing traffic onto Folkways off of 33rd Street and making u-turns there is meant to promote safety or are there more accidents by bringing in big trucks on small streets?

Hoskins replied that 33rd Street is an arterial street. Folkways is a collector street and basically has no homes fronting on it. They are both high type streets that can easily handle truck traffic. Figard reiterated that typically, truck drivers find the easiest way to make right turns to avoid some of the other turning movements to get in.

Werner wanted to know that when looking at economic development, what advantages are there for access vs. no-access?

Hoskins said that developers will tell you that having direct access in is a positive for them. If you look around the country at new developments, it is shown that as long as people can get into the sites, it is more of what is being offered over how you get there.

Werner asked if we just are talking about safety?

Figard answered that it is safety and capacity.

Ken Svoboda asked how do we eliminate access to the property, known as King Crest without buying that property out? Similar to what we did at 48th & 'O' Street. It may have been answered in that it was deeded that way.

Figard replied that it was deeded that way and we bought control of access and then maintained a residential type driveway across the T.O. Haas property so that current use at the time we came through was allowed to continue as long as the person wanted to live there and access his property. *Svoboda inquired if there was currently right-turn lane on N 27th Street to Folkways?*

Hoskins said there is.

Svoboda added that then there would be another one from Folkways to Enterprise Drive?

Hoskins stated that it would actually go to the north edge of the King Ridge property.

Svoboda asked who was paying for this?

Hoskins said that at this point it is a requirement the King Ridge Development to put that it. It is uncertain as to King Crest Development's responsibility in this.

Jon Camp asked about the developer's proposed private road that is coming in off of N 30th, the diagram is showing a road that is going north off of Folkways. Is that a part of the agreement?

Hoskins replied that the thought was most likely that the existing T.O. Haas driveway would probably go away and instead parking lot would connect onto the private road to have access onto Folkways. The cost would be half and half (King Ridge Development and property owners) because it is splitting property lines.

Glenn Friendt asked if the new option that has been provided for the new roadway eliminates any need for a u-turn to get to T.O. Haas?

Figard indicated that this was correct.

Friendt said that the safety issue is solved. It also provides access to this property in question and does it in a way that fits with the grade.

Figard agreed that this is the case.

Friendt stated that next to taxes, the biggest thing citizens talk about is traffic flow. This will require some tough decisions.

Hoskins wanted to mention that the location of the median break on Folkways would be a signalized intersection at some point in the future under the Traffic Impact Study that was prepared for the King Ridge Development.

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